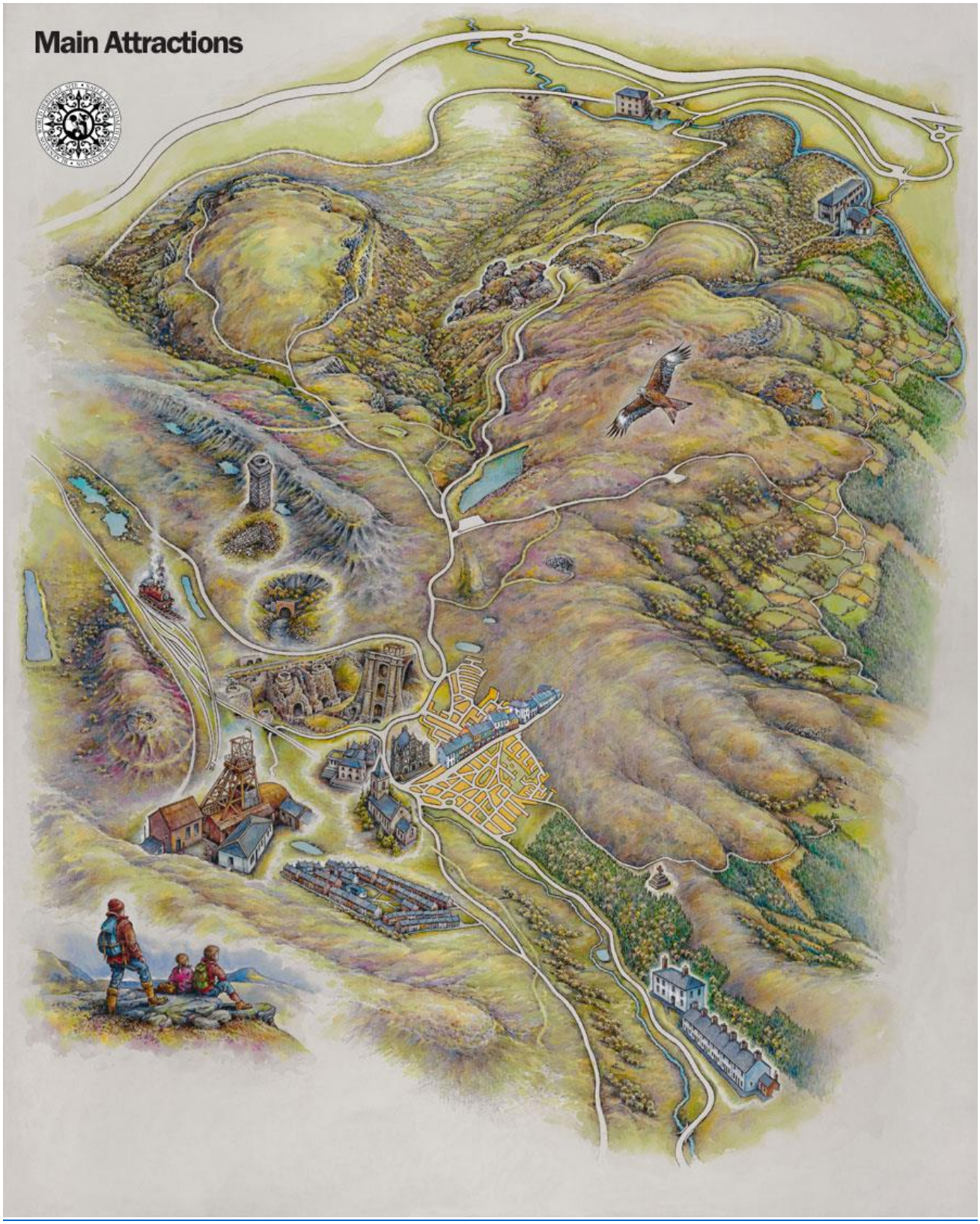


https://www.visitblaenavon.co.uk/en/Maps/main-attractions.html

INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution was a period of social, economic and political change, which began in England during the eighteenth century and continued into the nineteenth century. It was associated with the transition from manufactory, painting or craft production of goods to factory production on a large scale.

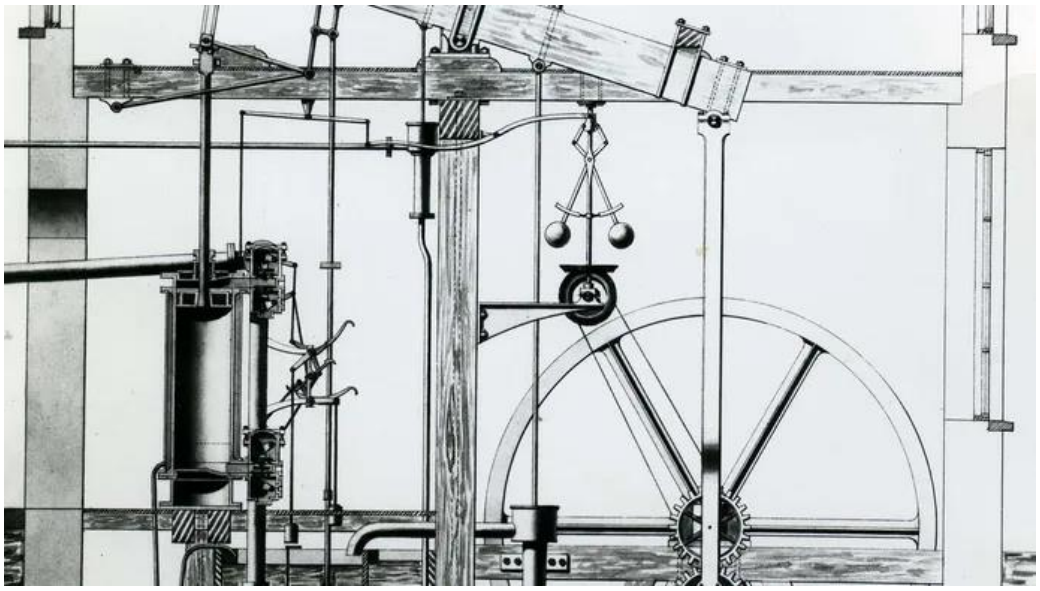
The main reason for the industrial revolution was demographic exposure. Great Britain was the only one in Europe not to be destroyed, or at least weakened, by the Napoleonic Wars, and came out of them strengthened by increased exports.

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain, the most developed and richest country in the world at the time, which also had efficient agriculture and energy resources such as stone coal. (2)

INVENTIONS

In 1803, the first steamship (Robert Fulton) was built. In 1804, the first steam locomotive entered regular operation. The constructor of the machine was Richard Trevithick. The inventor of the steam engine is believed to be James Watt, who in 1763 perfected the atmospheric steam engine built earlier by Thomas Newcomen. A steam engine was created, which began to be used in many ways: to move elevators, ships or locomotives. It was also used to drive displacement machines soon after. As a result, there was a great demand for stone coal as it was used to drive these powerful machines. The steam engine in the industry is a real breakthrough.

In 1877, Sidney Gilchrist Thomas, together with his cousin Percy Carlyle Gilchrist, (4) developed a method of smelting iron raw material from phosphorus-contaminated ores, thanks to which the place of iron in industrial production was taken over by steel. In 1879, the invention was used for the first time in industry. Steel was stronger than iron but required more complicated production. (2)



https://www.britannica.com/biography/James-Watt

BLAENAVON

Blaenavon is a town in south Wales, located on the source of the Afon Lwyd River. Blaenavon played a huge role in the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.

The Industrial Revolution would never have happened if it had not been for the commitment and innovation of entrepreneurs. In south Wales, at the end of the eighteenth century, the iron masters established a series of new iron smelters, making the region the most important iron-producing region in the world.

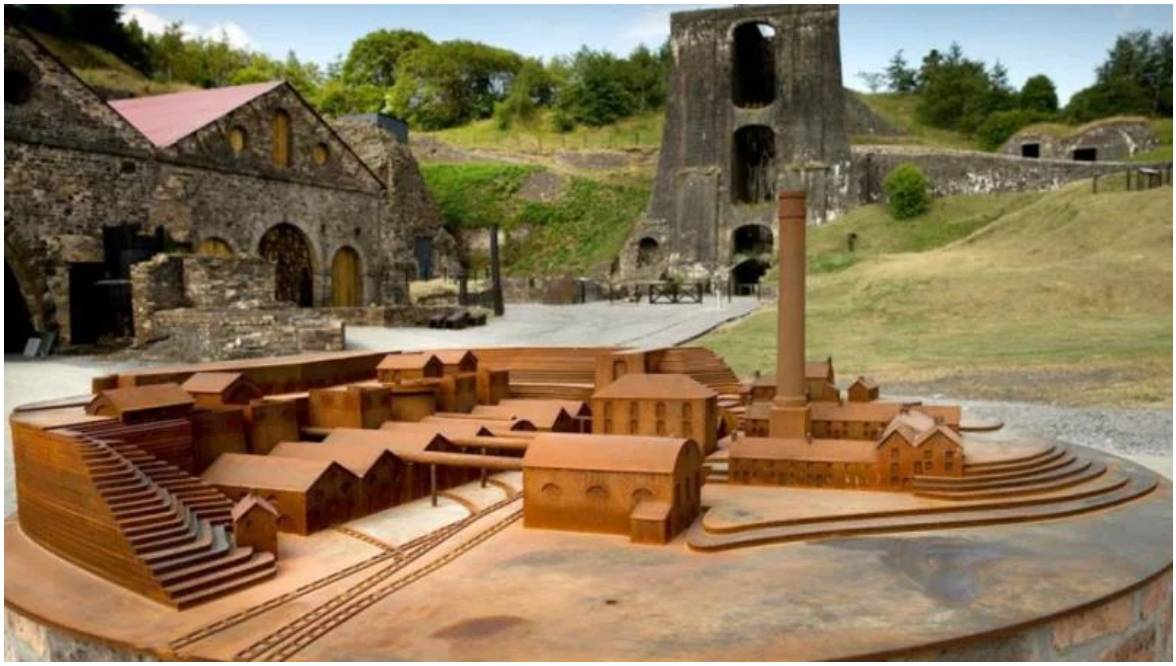
In the 1780s, Thomas Hopkins and Thomas Hill together with their business partner Benjamin Pratt turned their attention to south Wales, a region rich in mineral resources. They founded the Blaenavon steelworks, which opened in 1789, and at the end of the eighteenth century, the Hopkins and Hill families began a long cooperation with the growing Blaenavon community. (2) Sarah Hopkins opened a school in 1816, where she taught children from poor families. Hopkins and his uncle also contributed to the founding of St. Peter's Church in 1804. The Hopkins family also cared about health care, as injuries in the mines and steelworks happened on a daily basis. (3)

The working class undeniably played a huge role in the process of industrialisation, but it was due to the capital and experience of businessmen that the industrial revolution was successful. Thomas Hopkins was in contact with qualified and experienced ironworkers in Staffordshire, where he came from.

Many of them managed to convince them to migrate to Blaenavon, asking for help in setting up a new ironworks. Skilled workers were brought to Blaenavon because they were needed not only to help build and start work, but also to train new workers in the art of metallurgy. The development of metallurgy and mining caused a significant influx of people to Blaenavon. Skilled workers came mainly from West Wales, Staffordshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Somerset and Ireland. Unskilled men often came to work with their entire families. The Hopkins era is considered a golden age in history.

Around 1789, the Blaenavon steelworks gave the main impetus to mineral extraction and settlement. Numerous furnaces for smelting iron were created and the latest technologies were used for its production. The famous water balance tower created in 1839 is an example of lifting technology, using water to balance loads.

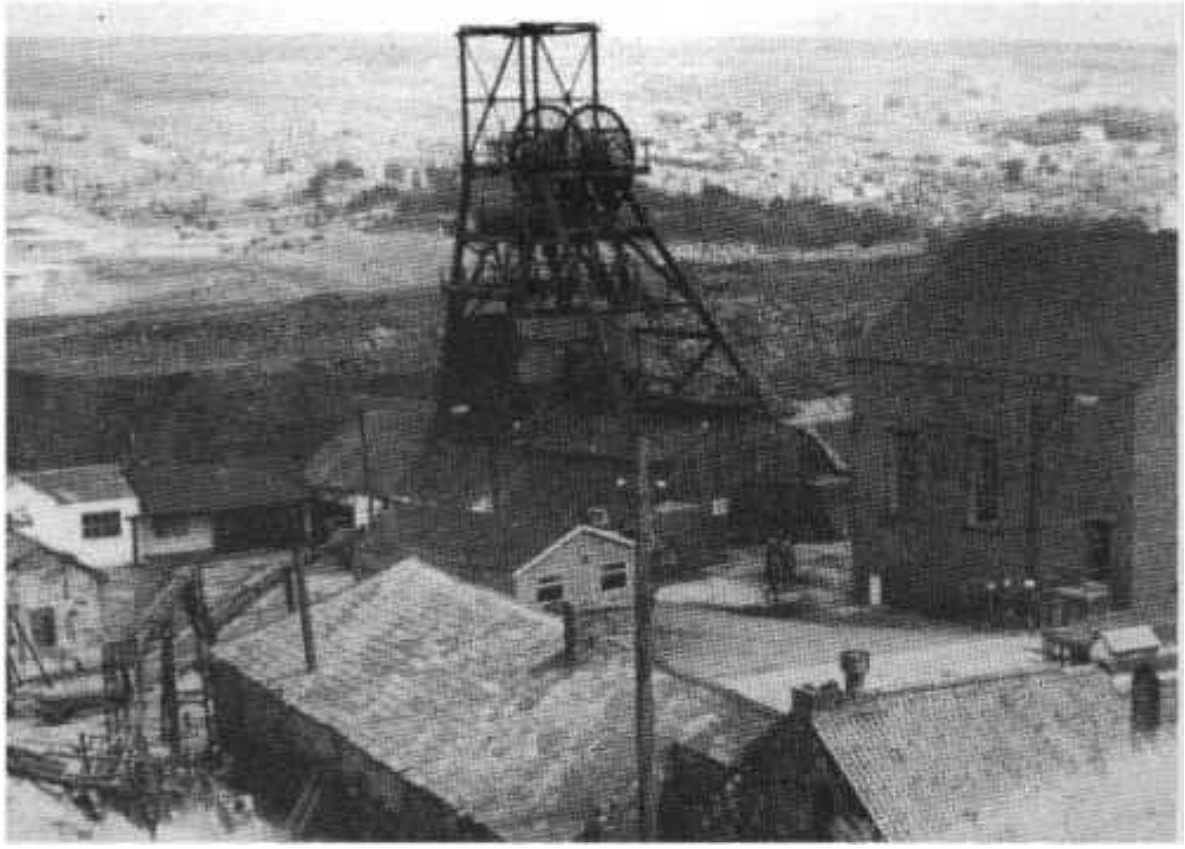
Working in the steelworks was very dangerous. Numerous accidents, burns happened, and a lot of people died. People lived near the iron smelter where there was constant noise, smoke, poisonous gas, stench, stain and heat. These were not favourable conditions for life. Salaries for work were not high. People worked with entire families, including children. The employees lived near the steelworks, where the employer provided them with housing, which they had to rent.



https://www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/attractions/blaenavon-ironworks-50284e87

Iron was used on the railway, for the production of ships and trains. Coal was used in the factory industry. By 1800, the Blaenavon steelworks had made a significant contribution to south Wales, becoming the world's leading iron production region. During the next decade, two new furnaces were added, and in 1804 forges were built in nearby Cwmavon. By 1833, the company owned 430 homes and employed 1,000 workers, but it overlooked the ups and downs of the economy that accompanied the production of iron. In 1904, the steelworks finally ceased production. It was restarted in 1924, but it was not possible to maintain. (1)

The Big Pit mine was opened at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Big Pit was a huge employer in Blaenavon. Workers in large parts came from the surrounding town and worked in the mine from childhood to death. Seven-year-old children sat in the darkness for 12 hours a day and opened the security doors, when miners in the tunnels appeared with carts full of coal. Women also worked and many often had miscarriages as a result of the hard physical work. In 1913, Wales recorded the largest production of carbon in history. The coal from Blaenavon was sent all over theworld. It was used, among others, by the Great Western Railway to drive trains and engines.



https://www.minersadvice.co.uk/wales_bigpit.htm

CONCLUSION

Britain was the richest country in the world during the Industrial Revolution. Many roads, canals and railway networks were created. The sailing system was also developed. The area around Blaenavon is evidence of the dominance of South Wales as the world's largest producer of iron and carbon in the nineteenth century. (3)

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